

Germany reacts at FIFA rule

BONN, Feb 8 (Reuters/Inter- net): German soccer authorities said on Monday they had been taken by surprise by a new FIFA rule on World Cup stadium capacity which rules out several of the country's proposed venues for the 2006 finals.

The German Soccer Federation (DFB) said it remained confident of its bid to host the 2006 World Cup, but would have to organise increased capacities at some of its venues.

The rule change was a surprise to us and we have to see now how it can be met.

But we are confident about our bid and that the stadiums can reach capacity," a DFB spokesman told Reuters on Monday.

Soccer governing body FIFA has asked that World Cup grounds to have a minimum capacity of 40,000. Germany had been working on the basis of 30,000, the capacity required in the World Cup in France in 1998.

The new ruling on capacity particularly affects stadiums in the former east German cities of Dresden and Magdeburg, but the DFB said that it would work towards increasing capacities.

African Super Cup Asec's

ABIDJAN, Feb 8: Asec Abidjan proved their claim to Africa club soccer supremacy when they beat Esperance of Tunisia 3-1 after extra time in the final of the African Super Cup on Sunday, reports Reuters.

Asec, who won their first African Champions' League title in December, triumphed over a seasoned Tunisian side packed with internationals and brimming with confidence after their victory in the African Cup Winners Cup last year.

But the victory could be at some cost to Asec and Abidjan's Houphouet-Boigny Stadium after yet another crowd problem involving the club at the same venue.

The start of extra time was held up for several minutes as Asec supporters rained missiles on the pitch in an angry show of disappointment after a last minute Esperance goal denied the home side victory in regulation time.

Water bottles and other objects started flying as soon as Esperance goalkeeper Chokri El-Ouer converted an 88th minute penalty awarded by Egyptian referee Gamal Ghandour after Asec's Toure Kolo Habib handled the ball in the box.

The fracas could not have happened at a worse moment for Asec and Ivorian soccer. The entire governing council of African soccer's ruling body, CAF, was in the stadium with the match taking place on the eve of a CAF meeting in Abidjan.

It was not immediately clear whether it was fear of further trouble that prompted match commissioners to decide on extra time rather than penalty kicks as set in the championship regulations.

Asec and the Houphouet-Boigny Stadium have faced the threat of sanctions since crowd violence marred last year's drawn African Champions League match between the Ivorians and Raja of Morocco.

That violence followed a decision by Mauritanian referee Lee Chin Young not to award a penalty after what appeared to be a foul on Asec's captain Tchoussoua Guel in the opening minutes of the match.

Riot police had to escort Raja and young out of the stadium, running the gauntlet of irate Asec supporters who later rampaged through parts of central Abidjan.

Esperance's equaliser came as Asec appeared to have victory in hand despite a spirited second-half fightback by the Tunisians.

Asec's ever menacing attacker Venance Zeze had given his side the lead in the 36th minute after beating the defence to power in a right footer at close range to cap a dazzling solo effort.

Harouna Dindane put Asec ahead again in the sixth minute of extra time and Zeze put the match beyond the reach of Esperance with Asec's third goal and his own double in the 120th minute.

CAF president Issa Hayatou was the chief guest at the seventh super cup match. The tournament was introduced in 1993 pitting the Champions League victor against the holder of the Cup Winners Cup.

Esperance have already won the title once before, in 1995.

Advantage Howard

CANBERRA, Feb 8: The federal government has backed Prime Minister John Howard ahead of Queen Elizabeth to open the 2000 Sydney Olympics, reports AP.

Howard has maintained that the Australian leader of the day should open the games instead of the Queen, who is the titular head of state, or her representative, the Governor-general.

Government senate leader Robert Hill said ministers had discussed who might open the Games following Howard's pre-election statement that he believed the Prime Minister should have the honor.

"I think it has unanimous support," Hill said Monday. "There was a cabinet decision on who should open the games, subject to official views."

The International Olympic Committee has said it will accept the Games being opened by the Prime Minister instead of the Queen.

REGRETS

Due to space constraint our regular item CROSSWORD could not be accommodated.

— Sports Editor



Junior Murray, the West Indies opener tries to turn South African fast bowler Allan Donald during the seventh and final one-day match at Pretoria on February 7. — AFP photo

Kallis' one-man show

CENTURION, Feb 7 (AP/Reuters): Jacques Kallis led South Africa to a 50-run victory Sunday in the seventh and final one-day international against the West Indies.

Set to score 227 for victory, the tourists were eventually bowled out for 176. The result secured a 6-1 win in the one-day series to add to their 5-0 whitewash in the Tests.

Perhaps South Africa's dominance was typified by man-of-the-match Kallis. He batted with determination and skill, took three outstanding catches, including one off his own bowling, and took three wickets in two hostile spells.



KALLIS... m-o-m

In his first over he took a sharp caught and bowled to send opener Shivnarine Chandepaul packing for six and then six overs later had dangerous Carl Hooper caught behind for eight.

A fine reaction catch at square leg helped dismiss Brian Lara and when he caught Keith Arthurton in the same position three overs later, Kallis had almost single-handedly taken out the tourists' top order with the score on 76.

Only makeshift opener Junior Murray stood as any kind of threat to South Africa. After he was dismissed for a fine 57, the lower middle order and the tailenders showed some fight, with Floyd Reifer hitting 22, Keith Semple 23 and Nixon McLean 23.

South Africa scored 226 for eight in their innings. Cronje won the toss for the seventh time and elected to bat on a pitch which promised good batting. But the West Indies gave their best bowling performance of the series, restricting the strong batting line up to a relatively modest total. Only a partnership of 98 runs in 119 balls between Kallis and Jonty Rhodes troubled the bowlers.

Kallis was top scorer for South Africa, his 66 another innings of the highest quality. The partnership with Rhodes, who contributed 41, was the only period during which the South Africans looked like they might loosen the stranglehold the West Indies had put on them.

Partnership came to an end when part-time spinner Arthurton took a sharp caught and bowled to dismiss Rhodes.

Three overs later Arthurton was again in the thick of things when he caught Kallis in the gully off Raw Lewis.

Despite a mini collapse, where three wickets fell for seven runs, Lance, Klusener and Pat Symcox pitch in at the end with a rollicking unbeaten eighth wicket stand of 36 off 32 balls.

Klusener scoring 21 off 23 balls and Symcox 17 at a run a ball.

It was a good effort by the visitors, who, inexplicably, did not play their best fast bowler, Curtly Ambrose. But captain Lara returning after an injury, shuffled his resources well and bowled both Reon King and McLean right through their allotted 10 overs each. They responded with two wickets apiece and between them, went for only 3.5 runs an over in their 20.

The home team moved ahead of the West Indies as the most successful team in the one-day version of the game. South Africa have now won 63.6 per cent of their matches, edging past the West Indies' 63.3 per cent win level.

Since the succession of Hansie Cronje to the captaincy, South Africa have won 76 out of 102 matches — a 77.5 per cent success rate.

Meanwhile, man-of-the-series Klusener scored 229 runs off the 203 balls he faced in the series, at an average of 76.3 and took 11 wickets at a superb average of 19.2.

Add to that the consistently good fielding of the South Africans and the fact that they always seemed to have more men like Klusener and Kallis available, and it is easy to understand why they are favourites to win the World Cup later this year in England.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the seventh one-day match between South Africa and the West Indies at Centurion Park on Sunday:

SOUTH AFRICA

Gibbs c Jacobs b King 12
Rindel b King 10
Cullinan b McLean 7
Kallis c Arthurton b Lewis 66
Cronje c Jacobs b McLean 41
Rhodes c b Arthurton 11
Pollock b Arthurton 22
Boucher run out 0
Klusener not out 21

WEST INDIES

Chanderpaul c and b Kallis 1
Murray c Klusener b Cronje 57
Hooper c Boucher b Kallis 8
Lara c Kallis b Klusener 9
Arthurton c Kallis b Klusener 2
Jacobs c Pollock b Cronje 6
Reifer b Pollock 22
Semple b Klusener 23

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Symcox not out 17
Extras: (b-1; lb-2; nb-10; w-6) 19
Total: (For eight wks in 50 overs) 226

Fall of wks: 1-23; 2-38; 3-49; 4-61; 5-159; 6-165; 7-166; 8-190

Bowler

King 10 0 30 2
Hooper 8 0 35 0
McLean 10 0 40 2
Semple 4 0 24 0
Lewis 10 0 53 1
Arthurton 8 0 41 2



KLUSENER... m-o-s

Lewis c Gibbs b Kallis 12
McLean run out 23
King not out 0
Extras: (lb-2; nb-5; w-6) 13
Total: (All out in 44.5 overs) 176

Fall of wks: 1-5; 2-24; 3-66; 4-75; 5-89; 6-95; 7-124; 8-148; 9-175

Bowler

Pollock 8 2 25 1
Kallis 8 0 38 3
Donald 8 0 33 0
Klusener 7.5 2 31 3
Cronje 5 0 21 2
Symcox 7 2 20 0
Cullinan 1 0 6 0

Result: South Africa won by 50 runs and win series 6-1.

Man-of-the-match: Jacques Kallis.

Man-of-the-series: Lance Klusener.

First match: Johannesburg — South Africa won by 2 wickets.

Second match: East London — West Indies won by 43 runs.

Third match: Durban — South Africa won by 55 runs.

Fourth match: Port Elizabeth — South Africa won by 99 runs.

Fifth match: Cape Town — South Africa won by 89 runs.

Sixth match: Bloemfontein — South Africa won by 114 runs.

England at full strength

SYDNEY, Feb 8: England paceman Darren Gough and batsman Neil Fairbrother have been declared fit for Wednesday's limited overs finals match against Australia at the SCG, reports AP.

Captain Alec Stewart said he was certain both would play against the in-form Australian team, which has rattled up record scores in Sydney and Melbourne this campaign.

Australia capped the qualifying rounds with a record 310-8 against Sri Lanka on Sunday which included a record individual score of 154 from opener Adam Gilchrist.

Gough and Fairbrother were both suffering hamstring strains but were able to train at an indoor net session Monday. Constant rain trapped the players inside.

The first of the best of three finals series comes after the announcement of Australia's team to tour the West Indies later this month.

While Gilchrist suffered disappointment, medium pacer Adam Dale will celebrate an unexpected call-up.

Some pundits believed Dale was becoming typecast as a one-day specialist following his excellent form in the limited overs tri-series this season.

He bowls an immaculate line and length and is seen as a key man in the finals.

"Dale? It would be nice to disturb him a bit," said England coach David Lloyd. "We've got to go out and be positive. We are not getting enough runs, especially in the first 15 overs."

Dale has bowled 48 overs against England, at just 2.75 per over. He's added six wickets at 132.

"I'm trying to make the batsman think all the time, giving nothing that he might take a fancy to," Dale said. "I just keep it up there. I know I'm not the quickest bowler in then world around so I have to use other weapons and just force the error."

Tragedy for Alleyne

SYDNEY, Feb 8: England cricketer Mark Alleyne has flown home from the English tour of Australia after the death of his father Euclid in a car accident in Barbados, a team spokesman said, reports Reuters.

Alleyne left for England on Sunday after learning of the news in a telephone call from his brother, spokesman Brian Murgatroyd said.

It's very unfortunate, he heard overnight and we put the wheels in motion to get him back home," Murgatroyd said.

Alleyne, 30, was expected to fly on to Barbados from London.

England are scheduled to meet Australia in the best-of-three finals series of the triangular limited-overs competition from Wednesday.

Murgatroyd said England would not be calling on a replacement for Alleyne.

Muralitharan stays behind for treatment

MELBOURNE, Feb 8: Controversial Sri Lanka cricketer Muralitharan was left behind to have surgery on his bowling arm when his teammates flew out of Australia on Thursday, reports AP.

Muralitharan was no-balled for throwing by Australian umpire Ross Emerson last month, a decision which led to a nasty clash between Sri Lankan captain Arjuna Ranatunga and Emerson.

"There's a bit of surgery needed on his bowling arm; the shoulder needs some work to be done," manager Ranjit Fernando said Monday. "It's very minor and will be done in a day."

Muralitharan was born with a deformity which prevents his right arm fully straightening and the Sri Lankans have used the condition to argue there is nothing illegal in Muralitharan's delivery motion.

Fernando said the team would not be seeking any reaffirmation of Muralitharan's bowling action by the International Cricket Council (ICC).

"There's no need. The ICC has approved his action and there's been no change," Fernando said. "We're absolutely happy with his action. It was never a case of asking him to do any remedial work and I don't see any reason why it should be done now."

"There's been no change in his action from then and now. There shouldn't be any problem."

Sri Lanka missed the tri-series finals, winning only three of 10 games against Australia and England.

Muralitharan aggravated a hamstring tear in yesterday's loss to Australia and dashing opener Sanath Jayasuriya will be out for another six weeks after having his arm broken by Brendon Julian in Perth a week ago.

While Ranatunga refused to comment, Fernando was trying to take home some positives from a tour that at one stage looked like being abandoned.

"There are similarities between this tour and the last time we played in Australia when we went on to win the World Cup so, in that respect, there is a lot of optimism," Fernando said. "We have a lot of new players who made use of the tour and the tough times made the team stronger."

"Tours like that are going to help us to build a side for the World Cup."

Recounting the Laker magic



LONDON, Feb 8 (Reuters): They played in contrasting conditions and different eras but Indian leg-spinner Anil Kumble now holds a special place in the history of cricket with former English bowler Jim Laker.

Kumble emulated Laker's historic feat of bagging all 10 wickets in a Test innings when he returned figures of 10 for 74 in his country's 212-run defeat of Pakistan in the second Test in New Delhi on Sunday.

Kumble cleverly exploited the bounce on a dry, turning wicket to rival Laker's remarkable figures against Australia in Manchester in 1956 when the Englishman took all 10 wickets for 53 in the second innings for a remarkable match total of 19 for 90.

The wicket and the cricket world was very different at Old Trafford when right-arm off-breaker Laker made history.

Those were the days when fans watched the game on flickering black and white television sets and anyone suggesting a cricketer could wear anything but white kit would have been laughed out of the pavilion.

Jumpers were needed on that day when Laker — a modest Yorkshireman of few words who ironically went on to be a television commentator when he retired — took advantage of the wet pitch to achieve his feat.

Rain played a part in the whole series, causing a stoppage in four matches.

"It was a peak performance in helpful conditions by a very great bowler, probably the greatest off-spinner who ever lived," the respected cricket writer John Arlott wrote.

But he added: "Tell him a conversation."

Both men appear to have benefitted from a little help from their fellow bowlers.

Laker's bowling partner Tony Lock beat the Australian bats just as often in the series but Laker's greater accuracy gained him more wickets. Lock even stifled an appeal late in the second innings, seeing history in the making for his teammate.

Indian captain Mohammad Azharuddin said he had asked paceman Javagal Srinath to bowl wide deliveries in the last stretch of the match so that Kumble could equal a record at the other end.

But although he marked his name firmly in cricket's record books, Laker did not enjoy massive fame — even a few hours after his feat — and he had little time to enjoy it before he was back in action.

In his autobiography, Arlott tells how Laker stopped off for a snack at a bar on his way home after the match and was not even recognised by fans talking about his achievement.

"He stopped on his journey for a beer and a sandwich in a Lichfield Bar where a crowd of drinkers discussed his performance without recognising him," Arlott wrote.

It was past two o'clock when he reached home, and he was due at The Oval the next morning to play for Surrey — against the Australian.

"He was always drily shy about his performance, indeed, too modest. But there is no doubt that he was quietly proud of it — almost as proud as his wife."



JIM LAKER



An AFP file photo of Juventus coach Marcello Lippi (L) talking to playmaker Zinedine Zidane during a training session. Lippi announced his resignation on Sunday after Juve's 2-4 loss to Parma in a Serie A fixture at Turin.

Lippi decides to leave

TURIN, Northern Italy, Feb 8: Marcello Lippi, volatile manager of reigning Italian champions Juventus, offered to quit after his team crashed to another defeat, 4-2 at home to Parma, on Sunday, reports Reuters.

"If the problem with this team is me, then here's my resignation, let's see this team without the Lippi-problem," he said.

"I've tried to do everything possible to wake this team up, but I've failed," he said.

His crisis-hit side's seventh defeat of the season saw them slip to ninth place in the table — 15 points adrift of league leaders Fiorentina.

Juventus president Vittorio Chiusani said Lippi's statement had taken the club by surprise.

"This is the decision of a responsible man who, faced with a series of poor results, has decided to hand in his notice," he said.

"It has taken us by surprise. Tomorrow we will make our decision."

Lippi had already announced his decision to leave the club he has led since 1994 at the end of the season.

But in the last two months, Juventus's hopes of a third successive title have disappeared with a run of two wins in seven matches.

"If the fragility of this team, its failure to react is down to Lippi and everything that Lippi has done since he announced his departure at the end of the season, then I'm am ready to go," an angry Lippi said.

Only last month the Juventus management gave Lippi a vote of confidence after press reports that the club's worst start to a championship in over 50 years would lead to his premature departure.

The coach, one of the most successful in recent Serie A history, is expected to join Inter Milan next season with Carlo Ancelotti, a former Parma coach, taking Lippi's place at Juventus.

Since joining Juventus in 1994, Lippi has led the Turin side to three league titles and four consecutive European finals, including the last three Champions' League finals.

Lippi reportedly wanted to leave Juventus after last year's European Cup final defeat by Real Madrid in Amsterdam, but was persuaded to stay on for a final season.

But his failure to reinforce the teams' attack in the close season and the loss of Alessandro Del Piero in November with a serious knee injury has left Juve with the fifth worst goal-scoring record in the league.

Not even the signing of Juan

Ensaider from Spain and Thierry Henry from France has succeeded in solving the club's problems up front.

Neither player has found the net since their arrival.

Injury scare for Batistuta

FLORENCE, Italy, Feb 8: Argentine striker Gabriel Batistuta must wait 48 hours before knowing the full extent of the knee injury he suffered in Fiorentina's Serie A clash with AC Milan on Sunday, reports Reuters.

Club doctor Marcello Manzuoli ruled out initial fears that the Fiorentina captain had snapped ligaments in his left knee but spoke of severe bruising.

"We cannot rule out anything, said Manzuoli," even if the knee appeared stable enough under examination.

"An accurate assessment, when the knee is still at its most painful, is not possible, but I expect to give you more news within 48 hours."

The striker whose 18 goals in 20 matches have taken Fiorentina to the top of Serie A, badly twisted the knee clearing a corner just minutes from the end of his side's 0-0 draw with Milan.

After receiving medical attention, the Argentine tried playing on but fell to the ground and had to be carried off on a stretcher.

Earlier, Fiorentina coach Giovanni Trapattoni had suggested his inspirational captain could be absent for at least 40 days.

But the club doctor refused to be drawn on the subject.

Batistuta's absence could leave the league leaders without three first-choice strikers for next week's visit to Udinese.

Belgian Luis Oliveira has already missed the last three matches with injury, while Brazilian Edmundo was reportedly booked on a Sunday flight for Rio.

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1991-92 — Joined Luchese in Serie B
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1994 — Joined Juventus from July 1

Achievements with Juventus :

1994-95 — Serie A champions, winners of Italian Cup and UEFA Cup finalists (lost to Parma).
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FACTFILE

The following is a factfile of Marcello Lippi, who on Sunday offered his resignation as coach of Juventus :

1948 — Born April 11, Viareggio (Italy), played for Red Star Viareggio boys team.
1970 — Joined Sampdoria, playing as a libero.
1971 — February 17, made Italy under-23 team debut, played two matches in all for the national "B" team.
1981-82 — moved to Pistoiese in Serie B and then Luchese in Serie C.
Retired after 239 matches and seven goals in Serie A.

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Achievements with Juventus :

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Captaincy no longer an issue for Lara

CENTURION, Feb 8: Brian Lara, captain of the most dismal tour in West Indies cricket history, said on Sunday he was content to leave decisions on his future in the hands of the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB), reports Reuters.

Lara was speaking after South Africa won the final one-day international by 50 runs at Centurion Park.

"My captaincy is something that is up to the West Indies board to decide," Lara said, "but I am happy to serve West Indian cricket in whatever capacity."

Lara world record holder of the highest Test and first-class individual scores, said he believed players and authorities needed to meet and decide the way forward.

"There are a lot of worrying signs. We need to get everyone together to sort out how best to rectify the situation," Lara said. "It might be a long process but we have to be able to play cricket of a reasonable standard."

"The only consolation is that a lot of teams have come back from this."

During the three-month tour, West Indies won just three out of 21 matches, two of which were friendlies against provincial invitation teams. Their only international success was in the second one-day match in East London.

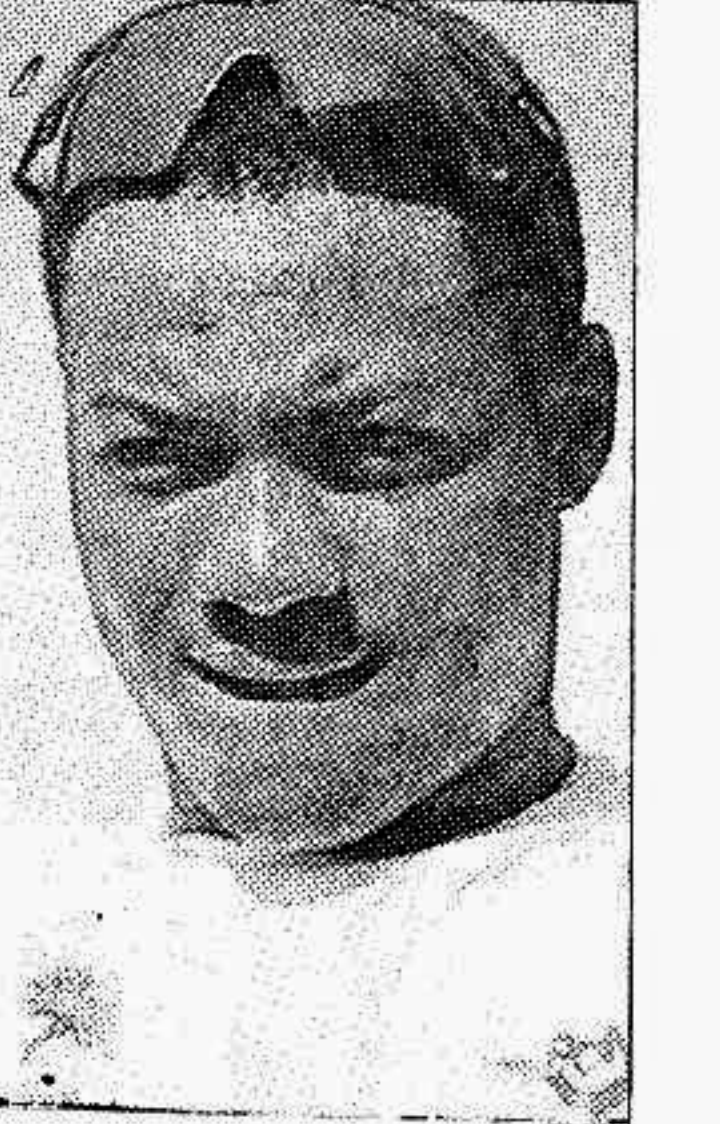
Lara denied that pay dispute between players and the WICB

at the beginning of the tour had affected their on-field performance.

"We have been through that and been bombarded by questions about it," Lara said. "At the end of the day, not everybody played to the best of their ability. Problems off the field should not affect what happens on the field."

Lara has little time to get his side back on track with Australia due to arrive for a tour of the Caribbean in a few weeks time.

"Australia are the best cricketing nation in the world at the moment and we certainly



BRIAN LARA

don't want to lose at home to them," Lara said.

"South Africa captain Hansie Cronje was understandably overjoyed at his team's performance."

"It's easy to lose that professional edge in a series like this but the guys stuck to it," Cronje said. "It's always a great honour to play the West Indies even if they